

Westford Recollections

by June W. Kennedy
CHARTER

ANNO TERTIO REGNI
REGIS GEORGII SECUNDI

An Act for Erecting the West Precinct of the Town of Chelmsford into a Township by the name of Wesford.*

Whereas, the Inhabitants of the West Precinct in the Town of Chelmsford in the County of Middlesex, have addressed this Court, setting forth the many difficulties they now labor under as a Precinct, which might be effectually remedied if they were constituted a Township:

Be it therefore enacted by the Lieut. Governor, Council, and Representatives in General Court assembled and by authority of the same.

That the lands contained in the said Precinct, as they are hereafter set forth and described, be and hereby are set off and constituted a distinct and separate Township by the name of Wesford. The bounds of the said Township to be as follows: Beginning at the South East Corner at a Heap of Stones, being the bounds between Chelmsford and the said Town of Wesford, thence running north to a chestnut tree marked and stones about it, so running on a straight line north to a tree marked at Coll. Tyng's Farm, thence Westwardly upon Coll. Tyng's Farm or Dunstable line to a heap of stones, thence Southerly by Groton line till it come to Littleton land, then upon Littleton land Southerly or Southeasterly, till it come to Concord Line, thence easterly on Concord Line to Bounds first mentioned. And that the Inhabitants of the said lands as before bounded and described, be and hereby are vested with the Powers, Privileges, and Immunities that the Inhabitants of any of the towns are or ought by Law to be vested with.

Sept. 20, 1729. This Bill having been read three several times in the House of Representatives, Passed to be enacted.

J. QUINCY, Speaker.

Sept. 23, 1729. This Bill having been read several times in Council, Passed to be enacted.

J. WILLARD, Secretary.

By the Hon.ble the Lieut.

Governor. I consent to the enacting of this Bill.

Wm DUMMER*

*1 -- This was the mode of spelling the word used by the Town Clerks generally, until 1744, after which time the practice changed to Westford, which without doubt is the true orthography. "Engrost Bill for a new Town by the name of Westford." Massachusetts General Court Records, Vol. 14. September 23, 1729.

*2 -- William Dummer had been acting Governor for a year then, in place of William Burnet who was appointed Governor by the King, and came to Boston in July, 1728. He died September, 1729, and Lieut. Governor Dummer was again in charge. George II succeeded his father, George I, in 1727, and reigned thirty-three years. He died October 25, 1760 "universally lamented."

The neighboring town of Bedford received its charter on the same day, and if it be allowed the priority, then Westford was the twenty-eighth town in the county in the order of incorporation or settlement.

There is no record on the town books of any town meeting held during the autumn of 1729. Probably there was no real necessity for one, inasmuch as the Committee of Precinct, at a meeting held September 2d, of that year, had made all needful provision for the next fiscal year.

THE FIRST TOWN MEETING

"Wesford, March the 2d, 1729-'30. At a General Town meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of the sd town Regularly Assembled to Chuse Town officers for the year ensuing.

Dea. John Commings Chose moderator for the work of the day.

Voted to Chuse five Selectmen for the year ensuing.

Dea. Joshua Fletcher Chose the first Selectman. Dea. John Commings Chose the second Selectman. Samuel Chamberlain Chose the third Selectman. Ins. Joseph Keyes Chose the fourth Selectman. Thomas Ree Chose the fifth Selectman. Dea. Joshua Fletcher Chose Town Clerk. Samuel Faset,

Town Treasurer.

Constables -- Aaron Parker and Aquila Underwood. Surveyors of Highways, Elias Foster, Ephraim Hildreth, Henry, and Andrew. Tithingmen -- Benjamin Robins, and James Hildreth, Jun.

Fence Viewers -- Joseph Hildreth Jr. and William Reed.

Hogg reaves -- William Butterfield and Ebenezer Hildreth.

The above named persons were Sworn to the faithful Discharge of their Respective Offices as the law directs.

JOSHUA FLETCHER,
Town Clerk of Wesford.

Voted the day above sd that swine shall goe at large. ---that Samuel Fletcher Senier's head shall be left out of the rates for the year ensuing. Voted the day above sd to Joine with Capt. Jonas Prescott, Ebenezer Prescott, Ebenezer Townsend, and Abner Kent, all of Grotton, in Petitioning to the General Court in ordere to their being anexed to Wesford Township. Voted -- the Selectmen shall appoint a man to Joine with the above sd Persons in Petitioning to the General Court in ordere to their being anexed to Wesford Township.

JOSEPH FLETCHER,
Town Clerk of Wesford.

The petition of Captain Prescott and others met with a favorable response. The territory thus joined to this town was triangular in, the base of the triangle being the shore of Forge Pond, and the sharp point Tyng's Corner on Millstone Hill. Although the section of Groton was annexed to Westford in 1730, it was nearly a hundred later, namely 1827 before the Selectmen of the two towns ran the boundary lines between them and erected permanent monuments. This was the only acquisition of territory the town has ever made, and there has been no loss.

